

# The Unreliable Narration and the suppression of Emotions in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*

N.Rema

M.A,B.Ed,M.Phil, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Kazuo Ishiguro a Japanese born British novelist has been celebrated as one of the renowned contemporary British writer. He has been nominated for several awards and possess' Booker Prize for the novel *The Remains of the Day*. As a product of Nagasaki, he has the very feeling of the post war dilemmas and deliberations. Though his family move to Britain, London when he is five, his natural instinct has the ideal nostalgia within himself but to a little extent. A kind of hybridity is chief in his novels, serving as a dual background for his novels. He quotes "I have this experience of another culture. I m also a very Japanese writer, keeping back the really scary and important emotions". The novels of Ishiguro are set in the past reflecting the 20<sup>th</sup> century confronting nasty life style. The novels are expressive about self-denial in the face of preserving the dignity that the protagonist faces. This self-denial is a fascinating feature that is associated with Japanese background. The setting of the novel deliberately changes to an English background narrating the story of an English butler who is the representative feature of Ishiguro's and 20<sup>th</sup> century modern Britain. Ishiguro quotes that he has a liking towards both the pre and post war settings as that they try to test the values and ideas. The post war tensions are seen in all of Ishiguro's narrative protagonists exhibiting human failings and the disclosing of their flaws of dilemmas.

Narration is the gushing forth of events form the mind of the individual. Sometimes it is the flourishing of events being explained with some strong interpretations in the beginning. It makes the reader impossible to change their interpretation though the actual information is revealed in the end. There is another type of interpretation that changes frequently giving forth so many interpretations. In this way, Narrative can be distinguished from the type of context in which the events are told. Such a narrative technique is well furnished and employed with a mixed chronology of the past in the novel of Ishiguro. The novel of Kazuo Ishiguro, "The Remains of the Day" involves first person narration observing the protagonist's memory and imagination. The historical events balance with the narration of the protagonist's experience of the past. The pouring forth of words and the technical employment bring before the real journey as well as the mental and the emotional journey of the protagonist. This narrative technique is a perfect pitch voice that enumerates the cherished moments of the protagonist, along with the proper historical and the psychological analysis. The narrative is powerful in the sense that it brings tears on how the protagonist has wasted his life and career throughout his life; as such every post war human does with the mental dilemma. The Butler's life is an example to showcase the 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain's individual in

most of the circumstances. Though the narration is dull, it embarks a spirit in the mind of the reader alerting the sense of an expectation .The real narration brings in, the real pathos or the preserved dignity as well as the perfection of the butler.

The narration is reliably unreliable as the protagonist doesn't undergo all the experience and the past events are just included as a part of the imagination of the protagonist. The narration is an accumulation of several incidents of the past and the present involving the protagonist's personal and historical trauma. Despite the physical condition, the pre-war or post-war period, the action unfolds the mentally anguished interior mental landscape of the protagonist. Thus the narrative of the protagonist's memory trip acts as a covering of his repression that finally breaks out. This narration has in itself the real life of Stevens at Darlington Hall and also his present journey. The journey is a relieve for the protagonist out of the Darlington Hall and also for his mental anguish. The concealed narrative again goes back to the old sentimental myth of the past. The butler doesn't follow the traditional way of revealing the aristocratic master's faults instead conceal the aristocratic faults.

The first person unreliable narration is "a gap between appearance and reality", quotes David Lodge. This sort of narration makes it impossible for the readers to find out the real truth behind the narration until the narrator leaves behind some witness like additional information or characterization being provided in one or the other way unconsciously. Bruno Zerweck describes "narrator's unintentional self-incrimination" as an essential part of unreliable narration which the readers sense out of the intended way. As such the narrator extends to picturise himself through long monologues that reveals the facts unconsciously to highlight the positive side and bury the other side unintentionally. Stevens also warns of the unintentional memory as 'It is possible this is a case of hindsight colouring my memory'. A profound truth lying beneath the mind of the narrator is purely shadowed by the memory just upbringing the ideological perspectives unintentionally, hiding behind the rest.

Amit Marcus calls this as "Self-Deceiving memory narrations" surfacing the complete and accurate truth with a tissue of lies. This kind of narration rejects a part of the disagreeable or the loathsome and projecting only the better side. The memory brings out the "Residues of the character's own conscious life". The unconsciously accessible memory holds the power to narrate the pleasant happenings making the reader to realize the narrator as a character. The title itself signifies the remaining-the residues of the memory. Similar to Plato's views "art is twice removed from the reality", here the memory presents not the real happenings but the secondary interpreted incidents –the interpretation of the narrators own. The memory is aware of what to include and what not. This is properly

accomplished by the protagonist where the unexpressed thoughts dominate the reader to make up a new story. Accordingly the memory of Stevens suppresses the conscious feelings, emotions unconsciously under the name "emotional restraint".

The eccentric holiday in the life of the hero, Stevens unfolds the narration of an unspoken passion and undeserved loyalty that the butler has for Miss. Kenton and Lord Darlington respectively that flows without being expressed. "The Remains of the Day" occurs within a large country house of an aristocratic lord, after the immediate outbreak of World War I. The psychological trauma in the mind of the post war individual is narrated in an autobiographical design. The prominent aristocratic figure, Lord Darlington as brought out of the memory of the protagonist is not a single figure but the representative of postwar England. The truthfulness of the servants of England is portrayed with reference to Stevens, a loyal butler. The perfect butler discloses a suspicion in the course of the novel, the evil intentions of his master to whom he has spent most of his life, sacrificing even his love. It is the memory that focuses on the unreciprocated love of the Butler. It is shown further that Stevens and the lady regret for not having admitted their love to each other. The elderly butler serves under Lord Darlington similar to the butler's father in Darlington Hall, one of the esteemed mansions of Britain. After the old master passes away and according to the new employer's suggestion, the Butler opens forth his memory of events, the tragic situation that unfolds about his own blunder of perfection for an undeserved and the professional cum personal attention towards his lady love. In the walk of preserving his dignity towards his profession, he denies proposing his love and concerns the duty even when his natural father is on death bed simply by attending the drunken guests. Highly satisfying his surrogate father, Lord Darlington the Butler utterly cares not his natural father. The memory perspective narrates the Butler's sincerity touching the heart, his mental make up to hide his love and affection towards his girl and father finally showcase how fool or innocent he is extracting respect from others. Through the memory trip, a terrible example is revealed with firing the two Jew servants where Stevens simply stays pale looking at his master being a pawn in the world of Hitler. Out of his memory he realizes the true nature of his master, but he compromises it as a way of preserving his dignity and loyalty asserting this dignity as the highest qualification of a butler. The mind and memory of Stevens tries to recover his past by looking for a solution but fails consequently. Thus the memory shows the protagonist to be a victim in the hands of history's deeds, including his lack of practical self or maturity to act accordingly. The memory takes the reader to the West Country of England, its landscape cum the mental landscape of the protagonist and also the political turbulence from 1920-1930.

The Butler's suppression of emotions reveals out the present and also bulk of incidents of past in an epistemological order. It's the mind that brings the mistakes that he has committed in the past and regrets the things that he should have avoided. Stevens makes use of repression to conceal or control some events from his conscious to unconscious mind revealing only the selected events. This repression of his love towards his girl and loyalty towards his master is intentionally done to avoid mental anguish. The memory portrays the honeycomb through which Stevens hides his inner wishes. This clothing of lies hides his personal

self, his past regards and loses. This clothing that is been dipped in the name of professional dignity comes out in the form of revelation of his repression. This suppression as Freud reveals is a vehicle to conceal avoiding mental pain and unpleasuring, also to maintain some sort of ethical standards. The protagonist plans to go for the remains of the day looking out positively.

The protagonist quits worrying for his lost love and his undeserved faith of Lord Darlington's Nazi's sympathies and switches over for making the "best of the remains of the day". He quotes, "I gave my best to Lord Darlington and hoping his life makes a small contribution to the creation of the better world". The protagonist preserves his dignity refusing to take up his own identity and not realizing his self worth, and his autonomy goes to the grave. Stevens acts forth according to the social role and doesn't accept his own mistake sprouting forth "I can't say I made my own mistake-Really one has to ask oneself what dignity is there that?" This act of preserving the dignity forms the chief in the life of the 20<sup>th</sup> century westerner. The explosion on Hiroshima and Nagasaki preach a new kind of redefined values and the public are bound to be bound together by a sense of duty consciousness towards the family, superiors and the country. Kazuo Ishiguro's protagonist is an example of the native values that has held Japan organized before a long time. Also there are some uncultured, uncivilized values that have evidence in it. Though the post colonial world has made people ineffective, every individual has some sort of pathos towards their culture that has been utterly damaged in the war. Stevens too possesses some nostalgia towards his master and the dignified values. In this way, the novelist also recounts the validity of his own prestigious culture though he is brought up as a British man. The loss of the aftermath of the post-war is big as such the loss of the butler, Stevens. The novelist's act of bringing out the flaws, accepting the past is the Japanese unawareness and their effort to come out of their mental anguish.

Henceforth the narration is unreliable and the protagonist suppresses his emotions totally shadowing his real emotions and becomes aware of it in the final section only. Kazuo's protagonist well furnishes his narration digging his deep lying facts bringing it to the surface unintentionally.

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AUTHORS

**First Author** – N.Rema, M.A,B.Ed,M.Phil, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore., remawinenglit@gmail.com